

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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P R 291600Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0000
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 01749

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OAS, SHUM, PA

SUBJECT: LIKELY PARAGUAYAN STANCE AT OAS GA

REF: C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 103851

1. PARAGUAY WILL SEND A STRONG DELEGATION TO THE OAS GA. IT WILL BE HEADED BY FOREIGN MINISTER NOGUES AND WILL INCLUDE MIGUEL ANGEL BESTARD, THE SUBSECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR. PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR CONRADO PAPPALARDO HAS INFORMED ME THAT HE PLANS TO ATTEND.

2. THE MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THE PARAGUAYAN DELEGATION WILL BE TO REFUTE THE IAHRG REPORT AND MAKE ITSELF AS INCONSPICUOUS AS POSSIBLE OTHERWISE. NOGUES INSTINCTIVELY SHRINKS FROM CONFRONTATION AND PAPPALARDO HAS TOLD ME HE WILL BE THERE TO KEEP AMB. MARIO LOPEZ ESCOBAR AND THE OTHERS IN LINE AND QUIET.
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3. PARAGUAY HAS BEEN QUIETLY RELEASING PRISONERS AND PRACTICALLY NO ONE HAS BEEN ARRESTED FOR POLITICAL REASONS IN 1978. THE IAHRG REPORT ON PARAGUAY IS NOT AS WELL DONE AS THE MAJORITY OF ITS REPORTS AND WAS OUT OF DATE AT THE TIME OF ISSUANCE. GIVEN THE PROGRESS ACHIEVED HERE THERE WILL BE MANY DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE SITUATION DESCRIBED BY THE IAHRG REPORT AND

THE SITUATION EXISTING IN PARAGUAY IN JUNE WHEN THE OAS GA MEETS. THUS PARAGUAY WILL HAVE A BETTER STORY TO TELL THAN URUGUAY AND WILL, I BELIEVE, DO NOTHING THAT WILL TEND TO IDENTIFY PARAGUAY WITH THE AGGRESSIVE LINE URUGUAY HAS TAKEN IN YEARS PAST.

4. THE LOPEZ ESCOBAR SPEECH REFERRED TO IN REFTEL IS A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF HOW THIS GOVERNMENT GETS INTO TROUBLE. THERE IS ALMOST NO HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION AND EVERYONE TRIES TO GUESS WHAT ACTION HE CAN TAKE THAT WILL MEET WITH STROESSNER'S APPROVAL. WHEN DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCNEIL GAVE LOPEZ ESCOBAR A NOTE CRITICIZING HIS DISGRACEFUL OAS PERFORMANCE THAT WAS ONLY A MINOR PROBLEM (THE NOTE WOULD HAVE ENDED UP IN THE EMBASSY SHREDDER) BUT WHEN MCNEILL SAID HE WAS SENDING A COPY OF THE NOTE HERE FOR DELIVERY LOPEZ ESCOBAR HAD HIS FIRST INKLING THAT HE MIGHT HAVE GUESSED WRONG. HE TELEPHONED AND PAPPALARDO REPORTEDLY TOLD HIM THE SPEECH WAS A GRAVE ERROR. LOPEZ IN A PANIC KEPT PAPPALARDO ON THE PHONE FOR AN HOUR EXPLAINING HOW THE SPEECH WAS NOT HIS FAULT.

5. RETURNING TO THE GA, ANY ATTACKS ON THE IAHR FROM PARAGUAY WILL BE COUCHED IN TERMS OF CRITICISM OF THE COMMISSION'S REPORT ON PARAGUAY. THS DOES NOT MEAN THAT PARAGUAY WILL NOT SUPPORT RESOLUTIONS FROM OTHER SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES CRITICAL OF OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY AND THE IAHR. PARAGUAY WILL GO ALONG WITH ANY RESOLUTION THAT THE OTHER PROBLEM COUNTRIES FIND ACCEPTABLE
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BUT BOTH NOGUES AND ESPECIALLY PAPPALARDO MIGHT POSSIBLY BE PERSUADED BY US TO WORK FOR A MODERATE AND CONCILIATORY OVERALL RESOLUTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS IF THAT IS OUR OBJECTIVE.
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